

Looking ahead to a busy schedule of events

Spring will provide some great opportunities for nursing in the areas of continuing education and worthwhile causes, writes Lorraine McDonnell

IVNA ANNUAL CONGRESS

The sixth annual Irish Veterinary Nursing Association (IVNA) Congress will take place in Mullingar Park Hotel on May 23-24, 2015. This year, we have a variety of interesting and topical lectures on various aspects of veterinary nursing.

Starting off on Saturday, May 23, there will be a lecture on 'Poisoning – do's and don'ts' of patient care. This covers a wide area including phone triage, identifying emergencies and the newest protocols used. After a tea break, we will change direction to the very popular topic of the 'Behaviour of dogs and cats'.

Prior to lunch, our annual AGM will be held, which any IVNA member is welcome to attend – even if they did not register for the congress – and we encourage every member to come along.

Our afternoon session focuses on the science and management of obesity cases, employment law, and advances in animal companion analgesia.

Don't forget our awards evening on the Saturday night, May 23, an evening to celebrate our great profession and a chance to highlight the fantastic achievements of our colleagues.

Sunday, May 24, brings our popular practical sessions. This year we are running a two-stream session encompassing the two practical topics of 'Small and large animal endoparasitology' and 'CPR – keep calm and save lives'.

So don't miss out on our early bird rates for congress, which are available until March 31.

IVNA CHARITY OF THE YEAR 2015

HUG was chosen as the IVNA charity of the year by our members via an email poll before Christmas. HUG was originally established as Kerry Greyhound Homefinders in 2002. However, it was re-branded in 2012 to Homes for Unwanted Greyhounds (HUG). Its main aim is the rescuing and re-homing of Irish racing greyhounds. There are approximately 20,000 greyhounds bred in Ireland every year for the racing industry, and every year thousands are retired from racing due to injury, lack of speed or disinclination to chase. The majority of the retired dogs are still healthy and are as young as two-to-four years of age. If they do not find a new home through a rescue group such as HUG, they are usually destroyed when they are no longer able to earn money as viable racers.

It is HUG's policy that all of the dogs in its care are spayed/neutered, micro-chipped, vaccinated, flea-treated and worm-treated, and given a dental, if required. Due to such demand, the charity has no alternative but to rent

kennels; however, staff are extremely grateful to have dedicated foster homes that take in dogs that require a bit more TLC. While HUG aspires to have its own sanctuary facilities at some point in the future, it has a long way to go before that may become a reality, given the present economic circumstances.

As a registered charity, HUG receives most of its funding through public donations, including street collections and exposure at public events. It also sells small merchandise like wristbands and Christmas cards as part of its fundraising efforts. It receives a small amount of funding from the the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Irish Greyhound Board. Unfortunately, due to the economic downturn, the amount of corporate donations have decreased substantially.

Each greyhound generally costs HUG between €200 and €400 when medical costs and basic needs are factored in, eg. neutering, vaccinations, food, kennel fees, transportation and bedding. This does not include any extra medications or treatments.

HUG is run by a small team of dedicated volunteers who organise the day-to-day care and transport of the greyhounds. These volunteers give up a lot of their spare time for these greyhounds.

Some of their activities include: liaising with trainers wishing to surrender their dogs; arranging veterinary visits; coordinating logistics for dogs travelling to other centres, travelling abroad, to and from veterinary appointments, and racing kennels. HUG also carries out home visits, answers queries via phone and email, monitors financial transactions and, of course, cares for the greyhounds, including walking, feeding and training. Its time with the greyhounds allows HUG to assess the temperament and behaviour of each dog so it can provide an accurate profile to match the dog with suitable homes.

Both its website and Facebook page are updated daily, helping to increase adoptions in Ireland over the past two years.

In 2013, HUG was involved in re-homing more than 110 greyhounds. An increased number of adoptions have been arranged with homes in Ireland, which is excellent progress, as greyhounds are not often perceived as a pet dog in Ireland due to misconceptions about their temperament, energy levels and other preconceived notions. A major part of the work done by HUG, beyond placing dogs in homes, is to raise awareness of the plight of greyhounds in Ireland and promote their suitability as excellent family pets.

A long-term goal of HUG is to see no greyhound destroyed in Ireland due to lack of a home and,



while HUG is only able to rescue a small percentage of the greyhounds retired every year at the moment, it hopes, with greater public awareness and enforcement of welfare standards within the industry, this will change.

So if anyone wishes to donate, please visit www.ivna.ie and hit the donate button or join in on upcoming fundraising events.

COMPETITION TIME

1. Want to be in with a chance to win a Fujifilm camera? All you have to do is take a photograph of the IVNA Awards nomination poster (pictured above) displayed in your practice and send it into us on our IVNA Facebook page or email secretary@ivna.ie. The draw will take place on Saturday, May 23, at the sixth Annual Congress in Mullingar.
2. A second competition we are running is 'like and share'. Visit our Facebook page and simply like and share our poster and we will pick a name at random. The winner will receive a 'One4All' voucher worth €50... So go on, get liking!

MINI-MARATHON

Yes, it's that time of year again to get those runners out in preparation for the VHI Dublin Mini-Marathon this June bank holiday, and registration is already open. We are asking everyone – nurse, student nurse, support staff, or anyone who wishes – to join some of our committee members.

This year we are asking you to run (or walk) for greyhounds, with all proceeds collected going straight to HUG. So, if you wish to join the committee members taking part in the mini-marathon, all you have to do is contact Corina at corinaivna@gmail.com. If you feel you are unable to join us, don't worry, why not sponsor someone

or donate directly? There is a donate button on the IVNA website, www.ivna.ie

DOGS TRUST

This year we have an exciting and a very topical issue. On March 21, Steve Goward, deputy head of canine behaviour and training at Dogs Trust, is speaking on 'A guide to canine compulsive disorders and how to help'.

Registration starts at 10am and takes place at Dogs Trust, Ashbourne Road, Dublin 11. It has been awarded 5.5 CVE credits and is sponsored by Allianz.

Please see the IVNA website and Facebook page for further information.

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